A

WORLD

EXTRAORDINARY.

The following paper having been tranſmitted to Mr. FITZ-ADAM's bookſeller on the very day of that gentleman's misfortune, he takes the liberty to offer it to the public juſt as it came to his hand.

TO Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

AS the contagion of politics has been ſo prevalent of late, that it has even (I won't ſay, infected, but at leaſt) infuſed itſelf into the papers of the impartial Mr. Fitz-Adam, perhaps I may not make him an unacceptable preſent in the following piece, which will humour the bent of his diſorder (for I muſt conſider political writings as a diſtemper) and at the ſame time will cool, not increaſe, any ſharpneſs in his blood.

THO' the author of this little eſſay is retired from the buſier ſcenes of life, he has not buried himſelf in ſuch indifference to his country, as to deſpiſe, or not attend to, what is paſſing even in thoſe ſcenes he has quitted; and having withdrawn from inclination, not from diſguſt, he preſerves the ſame attachments that he formerly made, tho' contracted even then from eſteem, not from intereſt. He ſees with a feeling concern the diſtreſſes

diſtreſſes and diſtractions of his country; he foreſees with anxiety the conſequences of both. He laments the diſcord that divides thoſe men of ſuperior genius, whoſe union, with all their abilities, were perhaps inadequate to the criſis of our affairs. He does not preſume to diſcuſs the grounds of their diſſentions, which he wiſhes themſelves to overlook; and he would be one of the laſt men in England to foment diviſion, where his intereſt as a Briton, and his private inclinations as a man, bid him hope for coalition. Yet he would not be a man, he might be a ſtoic, if even theſe inclinations were equally balanced: his admiration may be ſuſpended, his heart will be partial. From theſe ſenſations he has been naturally led to lament and condemn the late torrent of perſonalities: he ſees with grief the greateſt characters treated with the greateſt licentiouſneſs: his friendſhip has been touched at finding one of the moſt reſpectable aſperſed in the moſt injurious manner. He holds That perſon's fame as much ſuperior to reproach, as he thinks himſelf inferior to That perſon's defence; and yet he cannot help giving his teſtimony to the reputation of a man, with whoſe friendſhip he has long been honoured. This ambition, Sir, has occaſioned my troubling you with the following portrait, written eight years ago; deſigned then as private incenſe to an honoured name; and ever ſince preſerved by the author only, and in the fair hands to which it was originally addreſſed. I will detain you no longer than to ſay, that if this little piece ſhould be accuſed of flattery, let it be remembered, that it was written when the ſubject of it was no miniſter of ſtate, and that it is publiſhed now (and ſhould not elſe have been publiſhed) when he is no miniſter at all.

I am, Sir,

Your humble ſervant,

H. M.

A WORLD EXTRAORDINARY.

To the Right Honourable Lady C. F.

MADAM,

I HAVE been attempting to draw a picture of one of your friends, and think I have in ſome degree ſucceeded; but as I fear natural partiality may make me flatter myſelf, I chooſe to ſubmit to your ladyſhip's judgment, whoſe prepoſſeſſion for the perſon repreſented is likely to balance what fondneſs I may have for my own performances. As I believe you love the perſon in queſtion, as much as ever other people love themſelves, the medium between the faults you ſhall find, and the juſt reſemblance that I ſee in the following portrait, is likely to be an exact image.

The gentleman I am drawing is about * three and forty: as you ſee all the fondneſs and delicacy and attention of a lover in him, perhaps your ladyſhip may take him to be but three and twenty: but I, whoſe talent is not flattery, and who from his judgment and experience and authority, ſhould at firſt ſet him down for threeſcore, upon the ſtricteſt enquiry can only allow him to be in the vigour of his age and underſtanding. His perſon decides rather on my ſide, for though he has all the eaſe and amiableneſs of youth, yet your ladyſhip muſt allow that it has a dignity, which youth might aim at in vain, and for which it will ſcarce ever be exchanged. If I were like common painters, I ſhould give him a ruddy healthful complexion, and light up his countenance with inſipid ſmiles and unmeaning benignity: but this would not be a faithful portrait: a florid bloom would no more give an idea of him, than his bended brow at firſt lets one into the vaſt humanity of his temper; or than an undiſtinguiſhing ſmile would ſupply the place of his manly curioſity and penetration. To paint him with a chearful open countenance would be a poor return of compliment for the

* This was written in the year 1748.

flattery

flattery that his approbation beſtows, which, by not being promiſed, doubly ſatisfies one's ſelf-love. The merit of others is degrading to their friends; the gentleman I mean makes his worth open upon you, by perſuading you that he diſcovers ſome in you.

He has that true characteriſtic of a great man, that he is ſuperior to others in his private, ſocial, unbended hours. I am far from meaning by this ſuperiority, that he exerts the force of his genius unneceſſarily: on the contrary, you only perceive his preheminence in thoſe moments by his being more agreeably good-natured, and idle with more eaſe, than other people. He ſeems inquiſitive, as if his only buſineſs were to learn; and is unreſerved, as if he were only to inform; and is equally incapable of myſtery in pretending to know what he does not, or in concealing what he does.

In the houſe of commons he was for ſome time an ungraceful and unpopular ſpeaker, the abundance of his matter overflowing his elocution: but the force of his reaſoning has prevailed both over his own defects and thoſe of his audience. He ſpeaks with a ſtrength and perſpicuity of argument that commands the admiration of an age apt to be more cheaply pleaſed. But his vanity cannot ſatisfy itſelf on the terms it could ſatisfy others; nor would he thank any man for his approbation, unleſs he were conſcious of deſerving it. But he carries this delicacy ſtill farther, and has been at the idle labour of making himſelf fame and honours by purſuing a regular and ſteady plan, when art and eloquence would have carried him to an equal height, and made thoſe fear him, who now only love him—if a party can love a man who they ſee is only connected with them by principles, not by prejudices.

In another light one may diſcover another littleneſs in his conduct: in the affairs of his office † he is as

† Secretary at war.

minute

minute and as full of application as if he were always to remain in the ſame poſt; and as exact and knowing as if he always had been in it. He is as attentive to the ſollicitation and intereſts of others in his province, as if he were making their fortune, not his own; and to the great detriment of the miniſtry, has turned one of the beſt fine cures under the government into one of the moſt laborious employments, at the ſame time imagining that the eaſe with which he executes it, will prevent a diſcovery of the innovation. He receives all officers who addreſs to him with as little pride as if he were ſecure of innate nobility; yet this defect of illuſtrious birth is a blemiſh, which ſome of the greateſt men have wanted to make them compleatly great: Tully had it; had the happineſs and glory of raiſing himſelf from a private condition; but boaſting of it, might as well have been noble: he degraded himſelf by uſurping that prerogative of nobility, pride of what one can neither cauſe nor prevent.

I SAY nothing of his integrity, becauſe I know nothing of it, but that it has never been breathed upon even by ſuſpicion: it will be time enough to vindicate it, when it has been impeached. He is as well-bred as thoſe who colour over timidity with gentleneſs of manners, and as bravely ſincere as thoſe who take, or would have brutality taken for honeſty; but tho' his greateſt freedom is polite, his greateſt condeſcenſion is dignified with ſpirit; and he can no more court his enemies, than relax in kindneſs to his friends. Yet though he has more ſpirit than almoſt any man living, it is never looked upon as flowing from his paſſions, by the intimate connection that it always preſerves with his underſtanding. Yet his paſſions are very ſtrong: he loves play, women more, and one woman more than all. The amiableneſs of his behaviour to her, is only equalled by hers to him——But as your ladyſhip would

would not know a picture of this charming woman, when drawn with all her proper graceful virtues; and as that engaging ignorance might lead you even into an uncertainty about the portrait of the gentleman, I shall lay down my pencil, and am,

MADAM,

Your LADYSHIP's

most obedient

humble servant,

VANDYKE.

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